



Mukti Foundation
মুক্তি ফাউন্ডেশন

Code of Conduct



Message from Executive Director



Greetings! In my capacity as the Executive Director of Mukti Foundation, located in Tala, Satkhira, I extend a warm invitation to go through the Code of Conduct policy for your knowledge and practice.

Since our establishment in 1996, Mukti Foundation has remained steadfast in its commitment to addressing social injustices, particularly those stemming from class, caste, creed, and gender discrimination. Over the past 23 years, we have expanded our programs to encompass a diverse range of issues and have extended our footprint across various geographical areas.

Our focus is on assisting socially disadvantaged women who lack access to essential healthcare and face economic vulnerability. Moreover, these women and their children often endure violations of their legal, human, and democratic rights, perpetuating the cycle of poverty and contributing to the degradation of urban environments, notably in unhygienic slum areas.

As we endeavor to fulfill our mission, Mukti Foundation places significant emphasis on accountability; primarily to the beneficiaries we serve. Additionally, we are dedicated to upholding the principles outlined in our constitution, ensuring accountability to our General Committee.

I extend my sincere gratitude to Malteser International for their generous funding of the “Towards Greater Effectiveness and Timeliness in Humanitarian Emergency Response”, (ToGETHER) project. As part of the ToGETHER project, the review of the Code of Conduct policy of Mukti Foundation has been undertaken. The project aims to mitigate the impact of disasters on local populations through localized, effective, rapid, and accountable humanitarian assistance. It also strives to foster equal and complementary partnerships between local/national NGOs and international NGOs, ultimately strengthening the leading role of local/national NGOs in the humanitarian system.

Let us collaborate to transcend organizational boundaries and address humanitarian challenges effectively, delivering meaningful impact and value to those we serve.

Warm regards,

Gobinda Kumer Ghosh
Executive Director
Mukti Foundation, Tala, Satkhira

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Background:

Founded in 1996, Mukti Foundation emerged from the initiative of a group of socially conscious youth deeply impassioned by the prevalent injustices rooted in class, caste, creed, and gender within society. Committed to challenging these inequities, the organization has since embarked on a transformative journey spanning over 23 years, progressively expanding its scope of intervention across diverse program components and geographical regions.

In the areas where Mukti Foundation operates, women face systemic social disadvantages, lack access to essential healthcare services, and grapple with economic vulnerability. Moreover, they endure the denial of fundamental legal, human, and democratic rights, alongside limited employment prospects. The organization operates against a backdrop where the rights of women and children are routinely violated within families and communities, contributing to the degradation of urban environments characterized by unregulated and unhygienic slums.

Empowering these marginalized groups necessitates not only addressing their immediate needs but also unlocking their latent potential for sustainable socio-economic and environmental development. As an accountable entity, Mukti Foundation prioritizes the welfare of its beneficiaries and operates under the oversight of its General Committee.

Furthermore, Mukti Foundation upholds stringent ethical standards, encapsulated in its Code of Conduct, as a testament to its unwavering commitment to transparency, integrity, and accountability. Guided by a set of core values encompassing democracy, social justice, equality, and human rights, the organization endeavors to foster institutional and individual values that drive positive change and promote community welfare.

Mission: To establish a non-exploitative, environmentally sound, surplus, and rights-based community.

Vision: To foster positive livelihood changes, including improved education, healthcare, access to safe water, a cleaner environment, employment opportunities, and securing the rights to ancestral lands of the economically disadvantaged, through participatory and accountable processes.

Goal: The goal of Mukti Foundation is to promote participation, self-reliance, and environmentally sustainable development among the impoverished, facilitating poverty alleviation and empowering communities to realize their full potential.

Policy Statement:

Staff members of the Mukti Foundation are entrusted with the responsibility to advocate for and champion the rights of vulnerable individuals across all spheres of operation. It is imperative that every action taken by staff members aligns with the core principles outlined in this Code of Conduct, as well as the overarching mission and values of the organization.

Before undertaking any action, staff members should engage in **critical self-reflection** by asking themselves the following questions:

- Is this action in alignment with the fundamental principles of the Mukti Foundation, including democracy, social justice, equality, human rights, and good governance?
- Does this action comply with the provisions outlined in this Code of Conduct, as well as any relevant staff rules, regulations, policies, processes, procedures, and guidelines?
- Is this action in accordance with the legal framework and regulations of the country in which it is being carried out?
- Will this action contribute positively to the reputation and mission of both myself and the Mukti Foundation, without causing harm or negative repercussions?
- Is there an alternative course of action available that would align more closely with the principles and standards set forth by the Foundation?

In instances where staff members are uncertain about the ethical implications or conformity of an action with the Code of Conduct, they are encouraged to seek guidance and clarification from their line manager or the Human Resources department before proceeding. This proactive approach ensures that all actions taken by staff members uphold the integrity, values, and mission of the Mukti Foundation while serving the best interests of the communities they aim to support.

Scope and Target Audience:

The Code of Conduct outlined herein **applies to all individuals affiliated with the Mukti Foundation, including but not limited to staff members, consultants, volunteers, interns, and any other persons operating under the Mukti Foundation's name and legal status.** This encompasses all staff members regardless of their location or position within the organization, whether they are based in Tala, Satkhira, Bangladesh, or deployed elsewhere.

This Code of Conduct is an integral component of the terms and conditions of employment for all staff members of the Mukti Foundation, irrespective of whether they have formally signed the document. By virtue of their association with the organization, all individuals are bound to adhere to the principles and standards articulated within this Code.

Staff members based in Tala, Satkhira, Bangladesh, as well as those on loan or volunteers representing the Mukti Foundation, bear the responsibility of ensuring that this Code is thoroughly understood and complied with by all accompanying family members covered under the Foundation's legal status. In the event of any breach of this Code by an accompanying family member, the responsible staff member may be held accountable, and appropriate measures.

Violations of this Code will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Mukti Foundation's disciplinary measures or Human Resource regulations. Additionally, the Mukti Foundation reserves the right to recover from staff members any expenses incurred as a result of a violation of this Code, including costs associated with remedying harm.

The Mukti Foundation is firmly committed to ensuring that all organizations and individuals with whom it collaborates uphold values consistent with those of the Foundation. This extends to entities with whom the Mukti Foundation maintains indirect associations, such as partner organizations, security personnel, or contractors. The Foundation will take necessary and appropriate actions to sever ties with any organization or individual whose actions, if undertaken by Mukti Foundation staff members, would constitute serious breaches of this Code of Conduct.

Monitoring of the Code of Conduct:

Staff Accountability

All staff members of the Mukti Foundation, including employees, consultants, volunteers, interns, and those working under the Foundation's name and legal status, are bound by this Code of Conduct. This obligation extends **beyond working hours and applies to both current and former staff members**. By accepting employment or engagement with the Foundation, individuals automatically agree to abide by the principles outlined in this Code.

Responsibility for Compliance

It is the responsibility of **all staff members** to familiarize themselves with the provisions of this Code of Conduct and ensure their adherence to its principles. Additionally, staff members are tasked with informing beneficiaries and individuals under their care about the Foundation's code of conduct and providing guidance on reporting any breaches or misconduct. **Any violations of this Code should be promptly reported to the appropriate channels.**

Management Oversight

Managers within the Mukti Foundation are expected to lead by example and cultivate a culture of compliance within their respective areas of authority. They must promptly escalate any reports or concerns regarding breaches of Code of Conduct and the HR compliance for appropriate action. Moreover, managers are responsible for fostering open communication channels with staff members, addressing concerns with sensitivity and impartiality.

Institutional Accountability

The leadership of the Mukti Foundation, including the Executive Director and General Secretary, bears the responsibility for establishing robust mechanisms to uphold the highest standards of conduct within the organization. This includes ensuring adherence to ethical standards in all interactions with vulnerable populations and maintaining professional integrity in external relations.

The Foundation's leadership is also tasked with addressing any breaches of the Code promptly and decisively, including taking necessary actions to discontinue associations with entities or individuals engaged in behavior contrary to the Foundation's values.

Rules of conduct:

All members of the Mukti Foundation shall adhere to the following rules of conduct.

Thus, all staffs shall:

Compliance with Rules and Regulations

1. Abide by the Staff Rules, Staff Regulations, and all applicable policies, procedures, and contractual obligations established by the Mukti Foundation.
2. Adhere to the laws and regulations of the country in which they operate, including any agreements governing the Foundation's legal status. Any violation of local laws may result in the Mukti Foundation withholding legal assistance and waiving any relevant immunities.

Behavior and Respect for Persons

3. Treat all individuals with equal respect and dignity, regardless of nationality, race, gender, religion, social class, or political beliefs. Conduct must align with the Fundamental Principles and the humanitarian values upheld by the Mukti Foundation, including respect for diversity, cultural sensitivity, solidarity, integrity, and accountability.
4. Consider the customs, traditions, and religious beliefs of the communities served by the Mukti Foundation, avoiding any behavior that may be deemed culturally inappropriate.
5. Ensure that individuals and their circumstances are portrayed respectfully and sensitively, while also obtaining appropriate consent for the use of any personal information, photos, or stories.
6. Employees should behave respectfully among each other and also while communicating with volunteers, communities, partners, vendors, donors and other relevant stakeholders.

Integrity

7. Execute all official duties with honesty and integrity, refraining from any form of dishonesty, corruption, favoritism, nepotism, or bribery. Staff members shall not accept any gifts or benefits that could compromise their impartiality or integrity.
8. Avoid conflicts of interest and disclose any potential conflicts involving business relationships, financial interests, or personal connections that may impact their role within the Mukti Foundation.
9. Refrain from misrepresenting their official duties or titles to any individuals or entities and uphold the reputation of the Mukti Foundation in all interactions.

Neutrality

10. Abstain from expressing personal opinions on political matters or engaging in political activities that may undermine the Foundation's impartiality or neutrality.
11. Refrain from accepting public appointments, outside employment, or engaging in activities that could compromise their independence or neutrality without prior approval from authorized Mukti Foundation officials.
12. Dress appropriately for the task at hand, ensuring that attire does not imply any military affiliation or status.

Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

13. Prohibit all forms of sexual exploitation, abuse, or violence, including engaging in sexual activities with individuals under the Mukti Foundation's protection or assistance, regardless of age or consent laws.
14. Refrain from exchanging money, employment, goods, or services for sexual favors or engaging in any form of exploitative behavior. Consumption or distribution of pornographic material on Mukti Foundation premises or equipment is strictly prohibited.

Protection of Information and Confidentiality

15. Maintain confidentiality and discretion regarding all official matters and handle sensitive information with care, following established guidelines for information security.
16. Safeguard the identities of beneficiaries and individuals served by the Mukti Foundation, disclosing personal information only when necessary to protect individuals from harm.
17. Obtain prior approval from authorized Mukti Foundation officials before publishing any work related to their duties, and refrain from disclosing internal information for personal gain.
18. The obligations concerning the protection of information and confidentiality outlined in subsequent rules shall persist even after separation from service with the Mukti Foundation. If any violations in this regards happens, necessary disciplinary actions can be taken by the organization at anytime.

Security

19. Adhere to minimum security requirements and regulations established by the Mukti Foundation, as well as local security procedures and instructions.
20. Follow all protocols outlined in the Fleet Manual and Driver Rules and Regulations when operating vehicles, including abstaining from driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
21. Comply with local traffic laws and regulations, refraining from any behavior that may jeopardize public safety or violate legal standards.

Use of Foundation Property

22. Handle funds and supplies entrusted to them with care and accountability, refraining from theft, misappropriation, or misuse of Foundation resources.
23. During contract period, all official communication should be done through official email. Personal email should not be used for any official information sharing.
24. Upon the discontinuation of job contract, the official email should be closed as per HR and IT manuals and mobile SIM should be handed over to the organization.

25. Use funds of the Foundation only with proper authorization and return all issued property, including identification cards, IT equipment and organizational badges, upon the termination of employment or service with the Mukti Foundation.

Commitment to Core Values

26. Demonstrate a commitment to democracy, social justice, equality, and respect for human rights in all actions and interactions, upholding these core values as guiding principles for Mukti Foundation's work.
27. Any conduct that contradicts or undermines these core values shall be addressed with seriousness and may result in disciplinary action.

Compliance for Acceptance of Advantages/Gifts

28. Prohibit soliciting advantages: Staff members must refrain from soliciting any advantage from individuals or entities with whom the organization has dealings, such as clients, suppliers, or contractors. Prior permission from the Management must be sought before accepting any advantage from such individuals or entities.
29. Treat voluntary gifts as organization's property: Gifts offered voluntarily to staff members in their official capacity are considered gifts to the organization and should not be accepted without permission. Staff members should decline offers if acceptance could compromise their objectivity, induce them to act against the organization's interests, or lead to complaints of bias or impropriety.
30. Maintain records of gift acceptance: Detailed records of applications to accept gifts should be maintained, including the name of the applicant, the occasion of the offer, the nature and estimated value of the gift, and whether permission has been granted to retain the gift or directions have been given for its disposal. Each application should be carefully considered by the Management or assigned personnel.
31. Accept gifts of nominal value: Staff members are permitted to accept gifts presented to them in their official capacity and valued below BDT 5000 without seeking individual permission from the Management. This includes gifts that, if refused, could be perceived as unsociable or impolite, such as tokens of appreciation received during seminars or similar events where the staff member is a guest speaker.

For gifts exceeding this nominal value, staff should submit a written application to the Management for permission to accept the gift. Each application will be carefully considered, and proper records of the application, including the name of the applicant, occasion of the offer, nature, and estimated value of the gift, and permission status, will be maintained. Possible methods of gift disposal are outlined in Appendix 2.

In case of any misconduct regarding the acceptance of gift will be handles as per the Bribery and Gift Policy of the organization.

32. Adhere to guidelines for private acceptance of advantages: There are no restrictions on staff members accepting advantages in their private capacity from individuals who do not have official dealings with the organization. In case of uncertainty, staff members should seek advice and instruction from the Management or assigned personnel.

Use of Internet and Social Media

33. Employees must exercise discretion and professionalism when using social media platforms, refraining from posting inappropriate, offensive, or confidential information related to the Mukti Foundation. This includes but is not limited to discriminatory content or sharing internal matters without proper authorization.
34. Employees should be mindful of their online behavior and its potential impact on the reputation and integrity of the Mukti Foundation. Refrain from engaging in activities on social media that could tarnish the organization's image or credibility
35. Avoid expressing political biases or affiliations that may reflect negatively on the Mukti Foundation's reputation or compromise its impartiality.
36. Refrain from sharing content that promotes anti-government sentiments or engages in activities that could be perceived as undermining the government's authority or stability.
37. Ensure that personal opinions expressed online do not interfere with the Mukti Foundation's commitment to neutrality, inclusivity, and respect for diverse perspectives.
38. Seek guidance from appropriate authorities within the organization if unsure about the appropriateness of posting content related to political issues or government matters.

Compliance for Conflict of Interest

39. Recognize conflicts of interest: Staff members must understand that a conflict of interest situation arises when their private interests or those of their connections compete or conflict with the interests of the organization. This includes financial and personal interests of the staff, as well as those of their family, friends, communities, societies, or any person to whom they owe a favor or are obligated in any way.
40. Deployment of family members: Employees should refrain from using their position within the Mukti Foundation to influence the deployment or hiring decisions involving their family members. All employment decisions must be based on merit, qualifications, and organizational needs, without favoritism or nepotism.

If a staff member's family or relative is hired by the organization, it must comply with the policies outlined in the HR manual. This deployment should go through the formal process, and permission must be obtained according to established procedures.

41. Seek approval for outside employment: Staff members wishing to engage in paid outside work, including part-time employment, must obtain written approval from the organization before accepting such employment. Applications for outside work should be submitted to the assigned personnel for consideration.

A register for such conflict of interest should be maintained by the organization and employees are expected to update their outside employment status bi-annually.

42. Disclosing Interest and Abstaining from Participation: In order to avoid any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest, it is mandatory for employees to reveal any personal interests they may possess in an ongoing or proposed contract or transaction related to MF. This applies to situations where they could potentially exert influence or have a perceived interest. These disclosures must be promptly communicated to their supervisor.

Other Reference Policies-

Staffs should also abide by the following policies-

- Fleet Manual
- PSEAH Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Gender and Diversity Inclusion Policy
- Anti-Harassment Guidelines
- Anti-Corruption and Fraud Prevention Policy
- Anti-Money Laundering Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Bribery and gift policy
- Human Resource Policy

All referenced documents are available by request to Human Resources.

Reporting of Code of Conduct Violation

Alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct can be reported through the following channels:

1. CRM (Complain & Response Mechanism) Hotline:

Gobinda Kumer Ghosh
Executive Director, Mukti Foundation
Mobile: 01716840797
Email: muktifoundationtala@gmail.com

2. Line managers, senior managers, or Human Resources Managers in the field, who shall direct the report to the Head of Human Resource Management Department.
3. If the Manager/ Leadership Position is the subject of the alleged prohibited conduct, the report may be made to the CRM Focal Point.
4. Anonymous reporting can be submitted in written form through the complaint box or email at muktifoundationtala@gmail.com

If alleged, or conducted breaches, the Focal Person will lead the formation of a code of conduct committee team and necessary attempts based on the investigation findings will be taken as per HR policy.

The ToR of the Code of Conduct Committee is attached in the [Appendix- 4](#)

Appendix 1: Definitions

"**Advantage**" refers to:

1. Any form of monetary gift, loan, fee, reward, commission, or valuable security.
2. Any office, employment, or contractual arrangement.
3. Any payment, release, discharge, or reduction of a loan or obligation.
4. Any service or favor, excluding entertainment, including protection from penalties, liabilities, or legal actions.
5. The exercise or refraining from exercising any right, power, or duty.
6. Any offer, promise, or undertaking, whether conditional or unconditional, falling under the preceding categories (1) to (5).

"**Harassment**" encompasses any improper and unwelcome conduct that may reasonably cause offense or humiliation to another individual. This can manifest through words, gestures, or actions that annoy, alarm, abuse, demean, intimidate, belittle, or cause personal humiliation or embarrassment to another person, creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

The terms "**favoritism**," "**nepotism**," "**cronyism**," and "**bribery**" encompass unfair treatment based on prejudice, support, or favor shown to friends and family (especially in appointments), as well as the acceptance, offer, or consideration of any improper personal benefit.

"**Sexual abuse**" refers to the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

"**Sexual exploitation**" refers to any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

"**Sexual violence**" encompasses any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic a person's sexuality, using coercion, threats of harm, or physical force, by any person regardless of relationship to the victim, in any setting, including home and work. Sexual violence includes rape, sexual slavery and/or trafficking, forced pregnancy, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and/or abuse, and forced innovation.

"**Pornographic material**" includes all sexually explicit material intended to cause sexual arousal, such as photographs, videos, and writings. Staff must comply with local laws if they provide a stricter definition of pornography.

Appendix 2: Disposal Methods for Gifts Presented to Staff in Official Capacity

1. Perishable gifts (e.g., food or drink) can be shared among office members or during organization activities.
2. Useful items may be donated to charitable organizations or other service units within the organization.
3. Items of historical or cultural significance may be sent to libraries or museums.
4. Gifts suitable for display (e.g., paintings, vases) may be retained for display in the recipient's office or elsewhere within the organization.
5. Gifts of low value (below BDT 500) may be donated for use as prizes in the organization's social functions.
6. The recipient may retain personal items of low value (below BDT 500).

Appendix 3: Examples of Conflict-of-Interest Situations

- A staff member participates in the selection process for suppliers or contractors, one of whom is a family member, relative, or close friend.
- A staff member holds a financial interest in a company being considered as a supplier for the organization.
- A staff member receives frequent or extravagant entertainment or costly gifts from the organization's suppliers or contractors.
- A staff member serves on a recruitment or promotion board where a candidate is a family member, relative, or close friend.
- A staff member involved in processing applications for admission to an organization-operated home for the elderly considers an application from a family member, relative, or personal friend.

Appendix 4: ToR for Code of Conduct Committee (CCC)

To ensure that ethical standards, integrity, and accountability are maintained within the organization, Mukti Foundation will form the Code of Conduct Committee (CCC). The CCC plays a vital role in overseeing the development, implementation, and enforcement of the organization's Code of Conduct. This committee is responsible for promoting and upholding ethical standards, ensuring that all members of the organization adhere to these principles.

Objectives: The CCC (Code of Conduct Committee) is dedicated to upholding the organization's ethical standards. This includes ensuring all members – staff, volunteers, board members, and stakeholders – adhere to the Code of Conduct. The committee proactively works to prevent breaches, address any concerns that arise, and cultivate a work environment built on integrity and respect.

Committee Composition

The CCC will be comprised of 4-5 members, with a designated coordinator to serve as the focal point of contact. Ideally, this coordinator will come from HR or Finance. To ensure a well-rounded perspective and effective coverage of the organization's needs, the committee should include members from various departments and staff levels.

Members will be chosen based on their:

- Unwavering commitment to the organization's values and the principles outlined in the Code of Conduct (CoC).
- Experience in effectively resolving conflicts and mediating disputes is highly valued.
- The ability to maintain confidentiality and remain impartial throughout the process is essential.

Committee Terms: Committee members will serve a one-year term, with the opportunity to renew their service based on performance and committee needs.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The CCC is responsible for developing, reviewing, and updating the organization's Code of Conduct in accordance with legal requirements, industry standards, and organizational values. The committee Periodically review the CoC for relevance and effectiveness. They can also recommend updated to the CoC as needed.
- The CCC shall develop and implement initiatives to orient staff, volunteers, partners, and stakeholders about the Code of Conduct, providing training sessions and resources to ensure understanding and compliance.
- The CCC will monitor compliance with the Code of Conduct, assess risks, and identify areas for improvement, working closely with relevant departments to address any issues or concerns.
- The CCC shall establish procedures for reporting and investigating alleged violations of the Code of Conduct, ensuring confidentiality, impartiality, and fairness throughout the process and protection for whistle-blowers.
- The CCC shall make decisions regarding disciplinary actions or corrective measures based on the results of investigations, ensuring transparency, consistency, and fairness in all decisions.
- The CCC shall provide regular updates and reports to the relevant authority within the organization, summarizing activities,
- The CCC shall handle all matters with the utmost confidentiality, ensuring the protection of individuals involved in reporting or investigation processes. The organization prohibits any form of retaliation against individuals who report concerns in good faith.

Acknowledgment

I, _____, confirm that I have read and understood this Staff Code of Conduct, and I agree to abide by its terms, which form part of the conditions of my employment/service with Mukti Foundation.

I am also aware that the organization has the right to change, amend or discard any or all the clauses of this Code of Conduct with the demand of time. If I breach any clause of this Code of Conduct, the organization has the right to take any disciplinary action against me under its Human Resource Policy Manual.

Full Name:

Signature: _____

Place: _____ Date: _____